

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 913

By Bone

A RESOLUTION to commend Terry J. Oliver for his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Terry J. Oliver is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary tenure as Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Mr. Oliver has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to his community; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Ken Givens appointed Terry J. Oliver Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture on February 18, 2003; and

WHEREAS, a West Tennessee farmer and businessman, Terry returned to state government, having served in the same capacity from 1987 to 1995 under Commissioners A.C. Clark and L.H. "Cotton" Ivy during the administration of Governor Ned McWherter; and

WHEREAS, as Deputy Commissioner, he serves as Chief Administrative Officer in the absence of the Commissioner; he is responsible for assisting in the day-to-day management of the Department, which has responsibility for agribusiness development, food safety, pesticide regulation, animal health and state forest management, among other duties; and

WHEREAS, Deputy Commissioner Oliver was the driving force behind separate state government reorganizations that changed the focus and impact of the Department by adding two programs that are now core Department missions: the transfer of the Division of Forestry and the Nonpoint Source Pollution water quality program; and

WHEREAS, Deputy Commissioner Oliver had the vision to propose the consolidation of departmental laboratory functions into a single facility at Ellington Agricultural Center; the construction of the Porter and Ivy Laboratories improved employee safety and provided state-of-the-art facilities that are critical to the regulatory programs conducted by the Department; and

WHEREAS, the Department's designation as lead agency for nonpoint source pollution water quality issues has provided for the installation of Best Management Practices on thousands of acres of Tennessee farmland through complimentary funding from the Federal 319 program and the Agricultural Resources Conservation Fund; Deputy Commissioner Oliver's foresight has proven to be a major reason for the improved water quality and reduced soil loss in the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, together with Commissioner Ken Givens, Deputy Commissioner Oliver helped to lead the effort to improve the effectiveness of the Division of Forestry by replacing the basic equipment used to fight wildland fires; the Governor and General Assembly recognized the needs presented by Commissioner Givens and Deputy Commissioner Oliver and provided funds for replacement of 112 dozers and transports and 90 pumper units, which exponentially increased the ability of firefighters to suppress wildland fires and, more importantly, raised the morale and increased the safety of employees; and

WHEREAS, Deputy Commissioner Oliver's farming background has been invaluable in the design and implementation of the highly successful Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program; his knowledge of the unique operational needs of the producer has enabled the Department to implement procedures that effectively and fairly provide funding to improve operations over a wide spectrum of agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Deputy Commissioner Oliver's experience and unique skill sets have been essential in the development of relationships with key Department stakeholders, such as the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, the USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA), the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the USDA Rural Development (RD), state universities and colleges, and others, as they have enabled the Department to more effectively deliver services to its customers; and

WHEREAS, his direct influence on developing positive relationships has resulted in improved policy development with the Farm Bureau, restructured and reduced debt service for

the Boll Weevil Eradication Program in concert with the Farm Service Agency, increased technical assistance available to landowners through cooperative agreements with the NRCS, and increased funding for agricultural development projects through Rural Development; and

WHEREAS, Deputy Commissioner Terry Oliver's management expertise, knowledge of agricultural operations, and common sense approach to providing customer service has made a lasting impact on the culture of every program area in the Department; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Oliver's accomplishments are not confined within the Department of Agriculture; a native of Gleason, Tennessee, he is also a partner in Oliver Farms, a row crop and cattle farm in Weakley County that he operates with his brothers and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Oliver currently serves as Chairman of the Ned R. McWherter Monument Commission for Weakley County, guiding the development of a commemorative statue to honor the 46th Governor of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, active in his community, he serves on the Board of Directors of First State Bank of Union City and the Weakley County Municipal Electric System; he is a former Director of the Weakley County Farm Bureau and current board member of the West Tennessee Tributaries Association; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Oliver is also a former member of the USDA Farm Services Agency state committee and has the distinction of having served as a delegate to the Tennessee Limited Constitutional Convention in 1977; and

WHEREAS, a graduate with a bachelor's degree in Education from the University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM), Mr. Oliver remains an active supporter of his alma mater; he has served in numerous university leadership positions and is a former member of the UTM School of Agriculture and Home Economics Advisory Council; the UTM Development Council; the Pacer Club, for which he has served as President; and the Athletic Committee, for which he has served as Chairman; and

WHEREAS, he currently serves on the Advisory Council for the Governor's School of Agricultural Sciences, one of only three enrichment programs in the nation for high school agriculture students; and

WHEREAS, Deputy Commissioner Oliver's impact on the Tennessee Department of Agriculture over the course of two administrations and three Commissioners of Agriculture is

reflected in program delivery at a highest level of professionalism; his unselfish devotion to Tennessee agriculture has been demonstrated in his willingness to provide assistance and advice to predecessors and successors and reflects great credit on him, his family and the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Terry Oliver is fortunate to share both love and companionship with his wife, Marsha, with whom he resides on their family farm in Gleason; they have two daughters and three very special grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Deputy Commissioner Terry J. Oliver is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Terry J. Oliver for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee as Deputy Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.